THE ORTHODOX WORD

January - February 1974 *Ninety Cents*

HIEROMARTYR JOHN OF LATVIA

THE ORTHODOX WORD

A Bimonthly Periodical

OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John* (*Maximovitch*), Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

PLATINA, CALIFORNIA 96076

1974, Vol. 10, no. 1 (54)

January - February

CONTENTS

3 A Reaction to The Call of St. Herman

4 Saint Bogolep, Righteous Child Schema-monk of Cherny Yar

10 Martyrology of the Communist Yoke: Archbishop John of Latvia *by Liudmilla Koehler*

19 The Scroll: Six Chapters on Mental Prayer (Chapter Six) *by Elder Paisius Velichkovsky*

24 The Typicon of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services: Chapter One: The Orthodox Christian and the Church Situation Today

36 The Life and Ascetic Labor of Elder Paisius Velichkovsky Part Seven: The Letters of Elder Paisius from Dragomirna

39 Orthodox Bibliography

COVER: Archbishop John of Latvia at the Blessing of Water on Theophany, 1931; to accompany the article commemorating the 40th anniversary of his martyr's death, October 12, 1934.

MICROFILM copies of all back issues and of individual articles are available from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI, 48106

Copyright 1973 by The Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

Published bimonthly by The Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.
Second-class postage paid at Platina, California.
Yearly subscription $5, two years $9, three years $12.
All inquiries should be directed to:
THE ORTHODOX WORD, PLATINA, CALIFORNIA 96076
Office of Publication: Beegum Gorge Road, Platina, California

A Reaction to *The Call of St. Herman*

FROM THE FORMER ASSISTANT TO THE HEAD OF THE ST. VLADIMIR YOUTH
ARCHPRIEST SERGEI SHCHUKIN

THE NEW ISSUE of *The Orthodox Word* is very rich in content; but I read with special interest your review of the book of Sergei Kourdakov. Your analysis of the book, as of Sergei's whole activity, is very valuable, since it illuminates the question from the Orthodox point of view.

Further, you have correctly touched on the question of our common tongue with the new emigrants, and in general with people from the Soviet Union. This problem has not been thought out at all by our Church, and one must think and pray about this. We must find some means of approach to people from the Soviet Union, especially the youth. This is an enormous and pressing problem of today which our Church must face if we do not want to lose all influence on people from the Soviet Union.

And finally, you have very well bound together the life of Sergei with the needs of the present day and with the activity of the Orthodox youth outside of Russia. Therefore, the last part of the article resounds like a call, and a very fiery call. This call must be heard in Orthodox circles and parishes. Perhaps some seed will fall on fertile soil.

I wish to thank you likewise for the concise description of the Youth Pilgrimage to Holy Trinity Monastery. It is written in the same "key" as the article on Sergei Kourdakov; that is, it forms a single whole with it.

In general, this whole issue has very much the nature of a call, and that is the most important thing today. For in fact our emigration is not concerning itself with the raising up of the next generation.

May you joyfully greet the Bright Resurrection of Christ. May God help you in your labors!

Christ is Risen!

Saint Bogolep

THE RIGHTEOUS CHILD SCHEMA-MONK OF CHERNY YAR

COMMEMORATED ON JULY 29

The editors of RUSSIAN PILGRIM* *have obtained a copy from an ancient manuscript of the Life of the divinely-wise child, Schema-monk Bogolep, Wonderworker of Cherny Yar (Astrakhan). In the printed catalogues of Saints there is only very brief information about him. Thus, in the work of N. Barsukov,* SOURCES OF RUSSIAN HAGIOGRAPHY, *it is said only that the holy child Bogolep died in the year* 1632. *In the Manual of Icon painting, under July* 29, *it is said that the child Bogolep "in appearance is young, on his head a cowl, garments of a monk" (Filimonov). In the book of Archimandrite Sergius there is a brief account of the Blessed Child in Volume* 3, *Appendix* 3, *page* 60; *and in Archimandrite Leonid's book,* HOLY RUSSIA, *it is said that Bogolep, Wonderworker of Cherny Yar, was buried in the city of Cherny Yar in the province of Astrakhan.*

In the manuscript which we have obtained, the Life begins with a text from the book of Tobit: "It is good to keep the secret of a king, but it is glorious to preach the works of God" (Tobit 12:11); *and further it says, "Therefore, remembering the miracles of this righteous and divinely-wise child, one must not think that God, Who is wondrous in His Saints, will fail to glorify this righteous one also, for the sake of the miraculous glorification of His Most Holy Name."*

IN THE REIGN of Tsar Alexei Michaelovich there lived in Moscow a certain pious nobleman by the name of Jacob Lukin Ushakov, who had a wife, just as pious, whose name was Catherine. The Lord God blessed their virtuous married life with the birth of a son, who was called in Baptism Boris, in honor of the Passion-bearer, the Russian Prince Boris, who is commemorated on May 2.

* This whole article is translated from RUSSIAN PILGRIM, 1893, no. 10. Bogolep is the Russian translation of the name *Theoleptus*.

SAINT BOGOLEP

Troparion, Tone 3

REJOICE, O BOGOLEP, divinely wise child,* thou didst appear on a white horse, showing youth an example of purity,* and all who revere thee, God's Schema-monk,* thou dost protect from foreign invaders and unbelievers.* Pray for us now that we may prosper in true faith and piety* and obtain from the Lord great mercy.

Soon after the birth of Boris, Ushakov was sent from Moscow to the outpost of Astrakhan for government service by order of the Tsar. The place of Ushakov's residence was to be the city of Cherny Yar, which was on the river Volga, 256 kilometers from Astrakhan.

Having entered upon the governance of the post assigned to him, Ushakov, faithful to his character, exercised the authority given him by God and the Sovereign wisely and virtuously. His wife was completely occupied with rearing the child. Boris, while still in his swaddling clothes, revealed in himself an extraordinary inclination for ascetic labors, which were completely unchildlike, and evidently he was fore-ordained by God's Providence to be a chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, for the glorification of the Almighty Lord.

The first extraordinary manifestation of the glorification of the Name of God in the child was the fact that on the days established by the Holy Church for fasting, Wednesday and Friday, in remembrance of the sufferings and death of the Saviour, Boris would not drink milk from his mother's breast and spent these days without food. The second extraordinary manifestation of piety in the child was expressed in his striving to hear the Divine service, so that no sooner would the bell begin to ring in the local belfry for the Divine service than Boris would begin to cry very loudly, and his childish cry would cease only when he was brought to church; and so his mother and their servants soon became accustomed to bringing him to church immediately after the bell would ring. In the church a joyful feeling would be expressed in the child's face, and only at the end of the Liturgy would he accept food. Then, with every day, Boris was strengthened more and more by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to the joy of his parents and the astonishment of all who knew him and heard about him.

In one of the sorrowful years when the plague had seized with its death-dealing poison the whole extent of the Russian land, from the royal city of Moscow to the boundaries of Asthakhan, the son of the Commander Ushakov, the pious child Boris, also became ill. His right leg was covered with deep sores, and the intolerable pain gave him no rest either day or night; but, faithful to his calling, the child Boris, limping, did not cease to go to the temple of God to offer his holy child's prayers, acting according to the Psalmist: *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners* (Ps. 83:11). By the zealous concern and care of his parents and the physicians, the disease of the legs finally passed. But following

upon this disease it was pleasing to God to send the young righteous one a different temptation: on his face there appeared a form of leprosy. But behold, during the time of this illness a certain monk came to the house of Jacob. Being hospitably received by the Commander, the Elder blessed all who dwelt in the house and visited the Commander's sick son. Seeing the monk, Boris became yet more inflamed with love for God. Seeing in him one sent from God, he began to entreat his parents that he be allowed immediately to be clothed in the Angelic habit. The desire of their beloved son was strange, but feeling beforehand that their dear child was not fitted for life in this present world, and knowing from the Lives of Saints examples of children receiving the Angelic habit, they decided to give their seven-year-old son this great joy. In the cathedral church of the Resurrection of Christ, Boris was tonsured in the monastic habit and called Bogolep. Then, soon after receiving the monastic habit, the righteous child was clothed also in the Schema (great habit).

The newly-made Schema-monk was not long to rejoice his parents and astonish everyone by his labors and his example of divinely-wise life. Two days after receiving the Schema, the righteous boy grew ill, and on the third day he was already called into the heavenly kingdom for the eternal glorification of the Lord, together with Angels and all the Saints who have pleased God. The parents of the newly-reposed one experienced a double feeling: great sorrow, expressed in lamentation and weeping over their beloved son, and also an inexpressible joy at the thought that the Almighty Lord had chosen the boy from their family for the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom.

With great honor the blessed child was buried in the same city of Cherny Yar near the very church of the Resurrection of Christ where he had received the Schema, at the left side of the Altar, so that from their mansion his parents might daily see the place of their son's repose and might pray to the Lord Who glorifies His Saints, that He, being All-merciful, might not fail to glorify also this God-pleasing child, the Schema-monk. For did not the Lord Himself say, *Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven?* (Matt. 19:14.)

The Lord Who is wondrous in His Saints soon glorified His new chosen one. In the reign of the same Sovereign, the Tsar and Great Prince Alexei Michaelovich, the rebellion of Stenka Razin infected the whole of Russia with a great turmoil. Having laid waste a multitude of cities and villages,

Razin came also as far as Cherny Yar, where he destroyed many houses and took many inhabitants captive for his own evil purposes. On leaving Cherny Yar, however, he remembered that he had not yet destroyed the city completely and that the soldiers from Moscow might find a point of support for their pursuit of him. Therefore, he sent a regiment of Tatars who had surrendered to him, so that they might destroy utterly the unfortunate city. But what were the astonishment and confusion of the Tatar regiments when, approaching the city, they saw, walking on the walls, a boy Schema-monk! Those who succeeded in going closer to the wall heard the voice of the holy Monk saying, "Depart from here, wretched ones! You cannot do anything to this city, because God has placed me to guard this city." Nevertheless, there were stubborn ones found among them who, despite everything, wished to enter the city, but an invisible power held them; finally, being struck by blindness, against their will they were forced to depart, and only a mile away from the city walls did they receive their sight back, by God's power, after having done nothing to the city because of the prayers of the righteous child Bogolep, being pursued by holy guards of Angels. They returned in disgrace to their Ataman, Razin, in the city of Astrakhan. But the outlaw did not believe the tale of the disgraced regiment and became extremely angry at them, sending another regiment to lay waste the city. This regiment met the same fate, and so the Moscow troops under the leadership of Ivan Bogdanovich Milaslavsky could enter the city and firmly establish themselves in it.

During the reign of the next Tsars, John and Peter Alexeivich, by the help and intercession of the child Bogolep, Cherny Yar was saved from the Kuban Tatars. When they came up to the city to lay it waste, there suddenly appeared before them a Child-monk on a white horse who strictly commanded them to go away. The Tatars were seized with an indescribable fear and returned without doing any harm to the city.

In 1695 a priest at the church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in the city of Astrakhan, whose name was John, was struck by an affiiction of the eye. Praying to the Lord to grant him healing, he had the joy after prayer one night to see the child, Schema-monk Bogolep, who commanded him to paint his image and send it to his tomb in the city of Cherny Yar, adding, "When you will have fulfilled this command, you will be healed of your affliction." Rising from sleep, the priest, who was also an icon painter, was perplexed as

to how, being almost blind, he was to paint an icon of the child Schema-monk whom he had seen. However, using all his strength so as to depict the righteous one, he took a board and made a sketch on it. What was his astonishment when, after undertaking the work, he began to feel that with every minute he was getting better, and at the end of the work he was almost completely healed! Having received help for his affliction, the priest began, day by day, to put off the finishing of the work, and he did not send the icon to the designated place; and finally he forgot about it altogether. Thus a year passed. The priest again became afflicted, even more severely than before, with a disease of the eyes. A second time the child Bogolep appeared to him, reproaching him for his negligence, and a second time commanding him to finish painting the icon which he had begun and not completed, and to send it to his tomb in Cherny Yar. Then the priest promised with an oath to fulfill the commandment of the blessed child if only he would receive healing. Immediately after this he undertook the completion of the work and, having finished it, with the blessing of Archbishop Sabbatius he set out with the icon for Cherny Yar, where, with a procession and the ringing of bells, the icon was triumphantly greeted and placed on the tomb of the child Bogolep.

In the manuscript which we have there are set forth several miracles received from the holy child. Without giving them all, we cannot fail to make a remark about the following extraordinary manifestation of the miraculous power of God through His chosen one.

In Cherny Yar there was a city guard whose name was Gerasimus, who was deaf and dumb from birth. Once at night, when as usual he was on guard at the tower which is called Zaklikusha, he saw before him the child Bogolep surrounded by an extraordinary light. Gerasimus was frightened and signed himself with the sign of the Cross and, not moving, with piety and reverence he looked at the light-bearing righteous one who said to him, "Do not fear, Gerasimus, but bow your head"; and when he had bowed his head, the holy child touched him with his hands and became invisible. From this hour Gerasimus was completely healed and was not deaf and dumb any more, and he began loudly to glorify the Lord and His servant, the child Schema-monk Bogolep.

The illustration of the righteous child which is here presented is taken from a rare copy of the above-mentioned icon which was painted by the Priest John.

Archbishop John of Latvia

BY LIUDMILLA KOEHLER

The author is the sister of the Archbishop's last Subdeacon.

AMONG THE GLORIOUS NEW-MARTYRS of our own century, some stand out from the others by the absolute clarity of their stand for Christ and His Church. They are not martyrs "incidentally," as merely a part of the universal campaign of the pseudo-religious phenomenon of Communism against the Church of Christ; rather, they are open and fearless confessors of Christ, whose very life is a bold challenge to the modern persecutors, even as was St. Anthony's life to the demons of the Egyptian desert. Such, within Russia, were Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and other founders of the Catacomb Church; and such, outside of Russia, was Archbishop John, the chief confessor and martyr of the much-suffering Latvian Orthodox Church.

Archbishop John was born Janis Pommer in 1876 in a peasant family in the district of Vendzen, Latvia. There was no Russian blood in his ancestry, even though later he revealed such a great love for Russia. His great-grandfather was one of the first to accept the Orthodox Faith in this region, for which he was subjected to a severe persecution. At that time there was a great interest in Orthodoxy among the peasants of Lithlandia, thanks to the preaching which had been begun in the Latvian language. The Lutheran pastors, for the most part, looked upon the local inhabitants and their language with disdain, and the Latvians, who at one time had been forcibly baptized as Catholics by the German invaders, after the Reformation had just as automatically been made Lutherans, following their lords. Those who had gone over to Orthodoxy in the middle of the last century were regarded by the local authorities (the German Barons) as rebels. The local inhabitants showed their attitude toward the "rebel" by making a mound over the place of his burial and erecting the Orthodox eight-pointed Cross on it. Both the mound and the Cross were later removed by the local authorities.

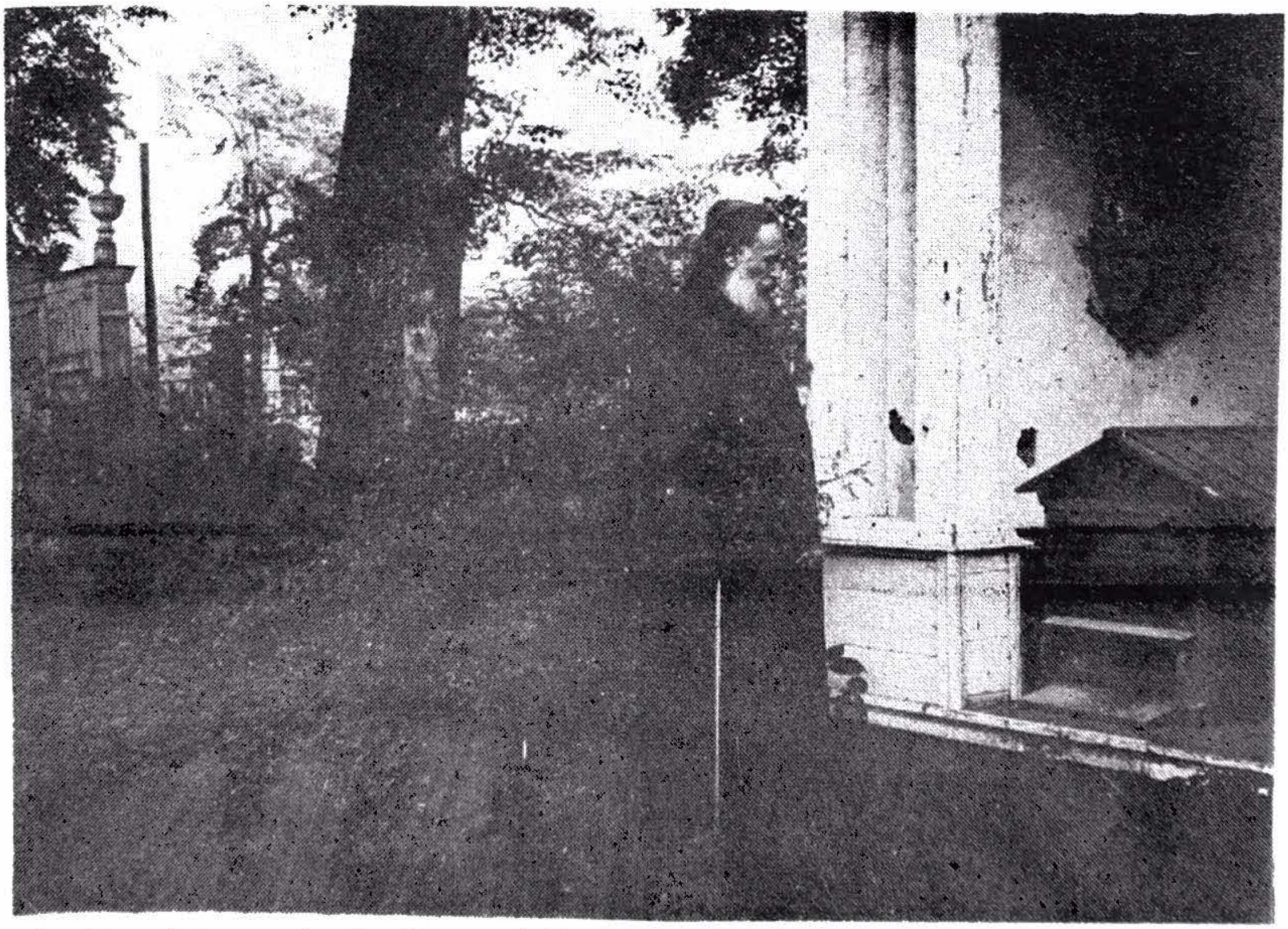
In his childhood, the future Archbishop helped his parents on the farm and was a shepherd. He was a serious boy, avoiding the noisy games of other children, and as a teenager he loved to go into the forest and stay there for a long time. His father taught him reading and writing so well that, skipping

ARCHBISHOP JOHN WHEN A YOUNG BISHOP

primary school, he entered directly into the state upper school. From his very first year in school he was so outstanding in his studies that his teachers fervently recommended to his parents that he be sent either to the Gymnasium or to the seminary preparatory school. At the advice of the local priest the boy was sent to the latter. After passing the examination, he entered the seminary preparatory school in 1887; in 1891 he transferred to the Riga seminary. Owing to his success in his studies and his good behavior, he received a scholarship during the whole time of his study. He always spent his summer vacations at home helping his parents in the farm labors.

He finished the seminary course in 1897, and finished it brilliantly. The disorders which came upon the Russian educational institutions at that time hindered him from continuing his education immediately. For three years he

Vladika's cell in the Cathedral basement.
Right: Archbp. John in his later years.



Archbp. John at the beehives of his summer residence, where he was martyred

worked as an instructor among the Latvian people, showing here great talent as a teacher. In 1900, having passed the entrance examinations brilliantly, he was accepted as a student in the Kiev Theological Academy, again on a scholarship. He was popular among the students, both for his outstanding success in his studies and as a hero in the realm of sports. For those who knew him well, however, the monastic tonsure of the young student in 1901 in the Archangel Michael Monastery of Kiev, was not unexpected. His companions, even before he was tonsured, called him "monk" for his devotion to the idea of absolute sobriety and, in general, for his strict continence in everything.

He finished the course of the Academy in 1904 so brilliantly that he was given a choice between a scholarly career and practical work as a teacher. He chose the latter. As an instructor of Holy Scripture in the Chernigov Seminary, he was able to inspire his students to such an extent that several of them devoted their lives to the study of the Sacred Scripture and later became professors of this subject. The seminary authorities also valued the labors of the young instructor, and in 1906 they promoted him to the post of Inspector of the Vologda Seminary. In the Vologda Seminary the future Archbishop also showed his ability as an administrator. The good order which he was able to bring in a very short time to the populous and disordered Vologda Seminary was so exceptional that, despite his young age, he was entrusted in the next academic year with the responsible position of Rector of the Orthodox Seminary of Lithuania and Superior of the Holy Trinity Monastery of Vilna. He was also given responsible assignments in the diocesan government. Therefore, his transfer in 1911 to Minsk, where the ailing Archbishop Michael of Minsk called him to the post of vicar bishop, was met in Vilna with regret by everyone. On his way to Minsk he participated in the canonization of St. Ioasaph of Belgorod.

In 1912 Bishop John was transferred to Odessa as a vicar of the Archbihop of Chersones, Demetrius, who was then very old. With the new year of 1913 he was given the responsible assignment of establishing in good order the newly-opened diocese of Priyazovsk. His relationship with the local inhabitants here was so good that this diocese became the only one in Russia in which his salary and that of his clergy was taken by the local people upon themselves. During his four years (until 1917) as head of this diocese, which embraced a so-called mining district, the energetic pastor visited all its corners. There were occasions when the Bishop was chosen as arbitrator when there were conflicts

between the workers and the employers. The workers considered him the defender of their interests, and the employers submitted to his decisions without discussion. When, in connection with the War, waves of refugees from Galicia and Czechoslovakia reached the "Quiet Don," they found in Bishop John one who took great care for their needs. Many refugee schools and orphanages were organized with his participation. Hundreds of grateful Galicians and Czechs became Orthodox, including the intelligentsia.

The Revolution found Bishop John in this post. He was dangerous to the revolutionary leaders, and the campaign against him began immediately. Both open and secret revolutionary agents followed him everywhere. Meanwhile, among the masses of people who were entirely devoted to their bishop, there was formed an attitude that was not acceptable to the local revolutionary authorities. Volunteers from among the workers and the soldiers organized a guard which watched over the bishop day and night. On his way to and from Divine services he was accompanied by great masses of people who were prepared to defend their bishop by force against enemies. The local revolutionary authority thought that it had found a way out by arranging the transfer of the beloved archpastor to the diocese of Tver. But after the final service in the cathedral church, the people returned their bishop by force to the episcopal residence and surrounded him with guards who were to prevent the departure or taking away of the bishop. Under such conditions the authorities in humiliation asked the bishop to leave the city for a time and go to Moscow. However, together with Bishop John a delegation from the people went to Moscow, representing the clergy, laymen, soldiers, and Cossacks, with the intention of protesting there against the actions of the local authority. In Moscow the delegation obtained its end with a favorable decision from both the secular and the spiritual authority. But the Bolshevik coup and the beginning of the civil war made the return of Bishop John to Priyazov impossible. Accordingly, he was assigned to the responsible position of Archbishop of Penza.

In Penza, where Archbishop John arrived at the beginning of 1918, the believers immediately undertook the organization of the defense of their archpastor from both the secular authorities and the church modernists. Again a volunteer guard was formed. The local Cheka immediately subjected the Archbishop to search and interrogation; but neither the one nor the other gave any reason for arrest. Then the Cheka agents decided to mark the celebration of Pascha in 1918 with the murder of Archbishop John.

In the evening of Pascha there appeared at the Archbishop's residence in the Transfiguration Monastery two Cheka agents armed to the teeth, the former officer Rudakov and the worker Dubovkin, and they began to demand access to him. The guard sounded the alarm to warn the people, and Dubovkin fled, but Rudakov broke down the door of the cell and fired several shots which were, fortunately, wide of the mark. The Archbishop succeeded in disarming him. The people who had gathered by this time intended to take care of the criminal by lynch law, and only the energetic intercession of the Archbishop saved Rudakov from certain death. And here a miracle occurred: Rudakov, who had just made an attempt against the life of the Archbishop, threw himself on his neck with the Paschal greeting, "Christ is risen!" Naturally the authorities were swift to deny any participation in this matter, despite the fact that Rudakov had a written order on his person. The unfortunate man was arrested and soon died in prison. Pascha week in Penza and in all this vast diocese was turned into an unheard-of demonstration of the love and devotion of the faithful for their shepherd. The authorities, calculating the situation, concealed themselves for a while and refrained from any obvious steps. The faithful, including even the liberal circles of the local intelligentsia, formed themselves even more tightly around their archpastor. The important local lawyer, V.A. Bezsonov, the Archbishop's legal advisor, became the head of these zealots and was his Subdeacon. Church life in the whole diocese was brought to life and strengthened.

When in May, 1918, a regiment of Czechoslovakians was going from the Don to Siberia through Penza, the Bolsheviks suddenly, for no reason, opened artillery fire against the Transfiguration Monastery. The place where the Archbishop was living became the center of fire. Later the authorities explained this incident as a misunderstanding, but the local people accepted this as an attempt against the life of their archpastor, and they protested. On September 7, 1918, the local Cheka again made a long search of the Archbishop's cell and office. Even though nothing incriminating was found, the Cheka agents took the Archbishop to prison for a confrontation with one of the prisoners. This caused the Archbishop to be late for the All-night Vigil of the Nativity of the Mother of God. When the believers found out that the Archbishop had been taken to the "house of no return," and on the day when executions were performed, those who had come to the service decided that the Archbishop had been shot together with the other condemned ones. When

Vladika returned very late to the Cathedral, instead of the All-night Vigil he found in progress a requiem service for himself.

For its next provocation the authorities made use of the local representative of the "New Church," V. Putyatu-Gruenstein, who, on September 14, appeared at the Sts. Peter and Paul Church with his followers when Archbishop John was performing the Divine service. They made an attempt to enter the church, but the people prevented this. Because of the disorders around the church the Archbishop also was imprisoned by the local Cheka as one under suspicion. He was kept in prison for a whole month despite his obvious innocence. From one day to the next the local Cheka was besieged by delegations of the faithful demanding the liberation of the Archbishop. Prayers were offered in the whole diocese for this. All of this caused the Cheka to stop their case against the Archbishop. On October 14 at midnight the Cheka agents began to call the prisoners, one by one, to the hall of the tribune to hear and sign the sentences. It was a Saturday, the day on which executions were usually performed. Those who were called went out and did not return. They were given immediately to the executioners. On the long list of the doomed, Archbishop John was the very last. This was a subtle torture: he had to suffer everything that is suffered by those who are condemned to death. About one o'clock in the morning he was finally informed that he was freed.

On July 18, 1919, the authorities called the Archbishop to the military headquarters, where he was examined and pronounced fit for military service, being assigned to a regiment in the rear. A postponement of this was won, thanks only to the intercession of the faithful. When, at the end of 1919, the White troops began to draw near to Penza from the south, the authorities hastily arrested the most visible Church people. On November 11 the Cheka agents conducted a new search in the Archbishop's cell, this time an especially careful one. Although nothing was found, the Archbishop was again arrested. The Cheka declared that a mythical counter-revolutionary organization had been discovered, the "members" of which were immediately executed. Bezsonov, Vladika's subdeacon, was among their number. In reply to the categorical protest of the Archbishop, he was sent to Moscow where his case was to be examined. His case was taken by the president himself of the Secret Operations Division of the Cheka, the famous Latsis (a fellow-countryman of the Archbishop, who eventually perished himself in the underground rooms which he knew so well). This time the Archbishop was imprisoned for three months.

The agents did not manage to collect or fabricate any incriminating material at all, and on March 11, 1920, he was freed.

IN FEBRUARY 3, 1920, Archbishop John was elected by a council of the Latvian Orthodox Church as Archbishop of Riga and All Latvia. Latvia, which until the Revolution was a part of the Russian Empire, suffered greatly the effects of the First World War and the disorders in Russia. Already in 1919 (January 14), Archbishop Platon of Revel had died a martyr's death in neighboring Estonia at the hands of Bolsheviks. Although the Communist threat receded for some two decades from the Baltic countries, still the Orthodox Faith in newly-independent Latvia was looked at by the government as something which had lived out its time and was now superfluous. The Cathedral Church of Riga, which under the German occupation had been turned into a Lutheran church, and had then twice been damaged in military action, was returned to the Orthodox, but since it was a reminder of Russian rule it now stood sealed. The bishop's residence and the St. Alexis Monastery were given to the Catholics, and other church properties were confiscated by the government and turned to secular uses. The Orthodox Christians not only in Riga, but also in all the cities and towns of Latvia, found themselves in terrible conditions, without a shepherd, persecuted, totally without rights. A systematic attempt was made to uproot the Orthodox Faith. Under these painful conditions, the Orthodox Latvians could have done no better than to choose as their archpastor Archbishop John, who was not only the most eminent Orthodox Church figure of Latvian blood at that time, but was also a man of great courage and decisive action.

At the repeated request of the Latvian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon onApril 14, 1921, blessed Archbishop John to go to Latvia, but on May 23 he changed his decision at the request of the clergy and faithful of Penza. Only on July 19, 1921, "in view of the importunate request of the Latvian Church," did the Patriarch give his final agreement for Archbishop John to leave, giving him a document of gratitude for his self-denying and fruitful labors for the good of the Church. Before Archbishop John's departure, Patriarch Tikhon, in agreement with the decree of the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, granted Archbishop John the widest canonical autonomy in the governance of the Latvian Orthodox Church. This act of confidence was completely justified by the further activity of Archbishop John, who in his martyr's death followed in the steps of the Patriarch.

On July 24, 1921, the Orthodox clergy and people, with crosses and sacred objects from all the Orthodox churches, triumphantly met Archbishop John at the train depot and conducted him to the Cathedral Church. Even while the Archbishop was celebrating his first service here (where an Orthodox hierarch had not celebrated since 1917), the local Orthodox leaders had no idea where he was going to live, since the bishop's residence had just been seized by the government. But at the conclusion of the service, after giving his blessing to the people, Archbishop John, to the astonishment of everyone present, went to the basement of the Cathedral and said: "I will live here." Thus he testified to the persecution of the Latvian Church and made the Cathedral the center of his unrelenting battle to restore the rights of the Orthodox Church in Latvia. In the campaign that followed in the Latvian government and press to demolish the Cathedral, the fact that Archbishop John himself lived there was a decisive factor that prevented the realization of this project.

The arrival of Archbishop John was the beginning of a new era in the life of the Latvian Orthodox Church. His first appeal to the Latvian government was met with the cold reply: "The laws of Latvia know neither the Orthodox Church nor its organs and organizations and do not oblige the Latvian government to defend the Orthodox Church." Soon, however, Archbishop John succeeded in obtaining the promulgation of a law concerning the Orthodox Church in Latvia which regulated the relation between the Church and the State and secured for the Church a number of rights, in particular obtaining from the government considerable sums of money. A stop was put to the senseless destruction of Orthodox holy objects, such as the removal of the chapel from the main train depot in Riga. The Orthodox parishes began to be strengthened and built, and the churches which had been destroyed in the War were restored. From the very beginning Archbishop John was the head of all the Orthodox Christians in Latvia, both Russians and Latvians, and it was thanks only to his unquestioned authority, mind, experience, and subtle tact that there was avoided the terrible division which prevailed in all the other States of the Baltic coast between the Russians and the local inhabitants. This Latvian by birth with a Russian soul was, as it were, a bridge between the two peoples, and both the one and the other considered him its own.

Beginning in 1925 Archbishop John became the representative of the Russians of Latvia in Parliament. From this moment his activity took on enor-

(*Continued on page* 28)

The SCROLL

CONTAINING
SIX CHAPTERS ON MENTAL PRAYER
By Our Father of Blessed Memory,
ELDER PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

CHAPTER SIX

CONCERNING THE BEGINNING OF HOW ONE SHOULD LEARN TO PERFORM THIS DIVINE PRAYER WITH THE MIND IN THE HEART.

IN ANCIENT TIMES, this all-holy activity of mental prayer shone forth in many places where the Holy Fathers had their dwelling. Therefore, at that time there were also many teachers of this spiritual activity. For this reason also, our Holy Fathers, when writing about it, set forth only concerning the unutterable spiritual benefit which proceeded from it, having no need, as I think, to write about the very experience of this activity which is fitting for beginners. And even if certain ones did write concerning this in some places, this was very comprehensible only for those who knew the experience of this activity, while for those who did not know this it was quite incomprehensible. But certain of the Holy Fathers, when they saw that true and undeceived instructors of this activity had begun to be quite few in number, and fearing lest the true teaching concerning the beginning of this mental prayer might be lost, wrote also concerning the very beginning and the experience of it, concerning how a beginner should learn and how he should enter with his mind into the land of the heart, and there form the prayer with the mind truly and without deception. The divine teaching itself of these Fathers concerning this subject should be set forth here.

Saint Simeon the New Theologian speaks thus concerning the beginning of this activity: "True and undeceived attention and prayer consists in this, that during the time of prayer the mind preserve the heart and remain constantly within it, and from there, that is, from the depths of the heart, it

should send up prayer to the Lord. And when it tastes with the heart *that the Lord is good* (Ps. 33:8) and takes sweet enjoyment, it will no longer depart from the place of the heart. And together with the Apostle it will say: *It is good for us to be here* (Matt. 17:4). And ceaselessly examining the places of the heart, it acquires a certain means of chasing away all the thoughts of the enemy which have been sown there." And further he speaks even more clearly about this: "Having sat down in a silent cell in some special corner, pay heed to do as I tell you: Close the door and raise your mind away from all cares, and press your chin to your chest, moving the sensuous eye in harmony with the mind. Subdue the inhaling of the nostrils so as not to exhale strongly, and strive mentally to find within yourself the place where the heart is, wherein it is natural for all the powers of the soul to be located. At first you will find there darkness and dense coarseness. But if you continue doing this night and day, you will acquire — O wonder! — ceaseless rejoicing."* And later he speaks yet more clearly about this as follows: "As soon as the mind has found the place of the heart, immediately it sees what it has never seen before: it sees air in the midst of the heart, and itself entirely bright and filled with discernment. And from that time on, no matter from where a thought might appear, before it enters and takes form it is immediately banished and destroyed by the invocation of Jesus Christ. Henceforth the mind, remembering the evil done by demons, raises against them a natural anger, pursues them and throws down the mental adversaries. And you will learn other things also with the help of God by means of preserving the mind, keeping Jesus in the heart" (Homily 68, "On the Three Forms of Heedfulness and Prayer").

* In his Russian translation of the Homilies of St. Simeon the New Theologian, Bishop Theophanes the Recluse has a footnote at this part of the text warning that these techniques, "owing to the insufficiency of guides, can be accompanied by bad consequences." It must therefore be emphasized that the practice of the techniques set forth in this Sixth Chapter *should not be undertaken without the indispensable condition set forth in Chapter Four: being in at least outward obedience to a spiritual father in a monastery.* For lay people these techniques may be reduced to a very simple direction, which Bishop Theophanes expresses thus: "The essence of the matter is to acquire the habit of standing with the mind in the heart. One must lead the mind from the head down to the heart and plant it there," i.e., acquire the habit of concentrated prayer, which "may most conveniently be attained by (in general) walking before God and the labor of prayer, and especially by going to church."

St. Nicephorus the Faster, teaching yet more clearly concerning the entrance of the mind into the heart, says: "First of all, let your life be one of silence, without cares, and at peace with everyone. Then, entering into your closet, close yourself in, and sitting in some corner, do as I shall tell you: You know that the breath which we breathe is this air; we exhale it by no other way than by the heart. And it is the cause of the life and warmth of the body. The heart draws in air in order by means of breathing to let out its warmth and acquire for iself coolness. The cause of this activity, or rather its servant, is something light, which being created by the Creator very fine, like some kind of bellows, easily breathes in and out what surrounds it, that is, the air. In this way the heart, drawing in coolness by means of the air and letting out warmth, performs ceaselessly the function for the sake of which it was established in the composition of life. Now, having sat down and concentrated your mind, force it to enter the heart together with the breath. And when it enters there, what follows after this will be not unjoyful and not unhappy." And later: "Therefore, O brother, train the mind not quickly to come out of there; because at first it will find it to be very tedious because of the inward enclosure and confinement. But when it will become accustomed to it, it will no longer bear to wander without, because *the Kingdom of Heaven* is to be found *within us,* and when we examine it there and seek it with pure prayer, then everything outward will become vile and hateful. If immediately, as has been said, you enter with the mind into the place of the heart which I have indicated to you: then give thanksgiving to God and glorify Him, and rejoice, and hold ceaselessly to this activity, and it will teach you what you do not know. And you should also know that the mind, remaining there, should not stand silent and idle, but should have as its ceaseless work and instruction these words: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me*; and it should never cease from this. This keeps the mind from being puffed up and preserves it beyond the reach and access of thoughts from the enemy, and raises it daily into love and divine desire. But if, O brother, after having labored much you cannot enter into the land of the heart as we have commanded you, then do what I shall tell you, and with God's help you will find what you seek.

"Do you know that the rational part of a man is in his breast? For it is within the breast, even when the lips are silent, that we speak and take counsel, and utter prayers and psalms, and so forth. To this rational part, having taken away from it every thought (for you can if you wish), let it say: *Lord*

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me; and compel it, in place of every other thought, ceaselessly to cry this out within. And when you will keep to this for some time, by this the entrance to the heart will be opened to you also, as we have written for you without any doubt, for we ourselves have discovered this through experience. And there will come to you, together with the much-desired and sweet heedfulness, the whole choir of the virtues as well: love, joy, peace, and the others."

The divine Gregory the Sinaite, also teaching how one should perform, with the mind in the heart, the most saving invocation of the Lord, says: "Sitting from morning in a low chair, lower the mind from the ruling place into the heart, and keep it there. And bending down with difficulty, and feeling a strong pain in the chest and shoulders and neck, ceaselessly call with the mind or soul: *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.* Then, if it happens that, because of the confinement or pain and from the frequent invocation, it becomes unpleasant for you (which occurs not because of the uniformity of the Three-Named Food frequently eaten, for it is said, *they who eat Me will yet hunger* (Sirach 24:23) — then transfer your mind to the other half; say *Son of God, have mercy on me.* And pronouncing this half many times, you should not often exchange the halves out of sloth and boredom; because fruit trees which are often transplanted do not take root. Keep your breathing also light, so that you will not breathe strongly. For the movement of air, which proceeds from the heart, disperses thought and darkens the mind; and returning from there, it either gives the captive over to forgetfulness, or forces it to be in one place instead of another. And thus it becomes insensible to that toward which it should not be insensible. If you see the uncleanness of evil spirits, that is, thoughts which arise or form images in your mind, then do not be afraid and do not be surprised; but likewise, if good thoughts concerning certain things should appear to you, do not heed them: but restraining the breath as much as possible, and enclosing the mind within the heart and constantly and frequently performing the invocation of the Lord Jesus, you will soon crush and uproot them, wounding them invisibly with the Divine Name, as St. John of the Ladder also says (Step 21): 'Beat the foes with the Name of Jesus, because there is no weapon stronger, either in heaven or on earth' " ("On Silence," II, 15).

And again the same Saint, teaching how one should sit in silence and prayer, says: "Sometimes one should sit on a stool for the sake of the labor, and sometimes on a bed for a little while for the sake of repose. And your

sitting should be in patience, for the sake of Him Who said that we must be *patient in prayer* (Luke 18:1), and one should not stand up quickly, becoming faint-hearted by reason of the difficulty of the pain of the affliction and the mental invocation and the frequent tension of the mind. Thus also the Prophet declares: *Afflictions have taken possession of me as of one giving birth* (Jer. 8:21). And so, penetrating downward and concentrating the mind in the heart, if your heart should be opened to you, call to your aid the Lord Jesus. If the shoulders should hurt and the head be frequently pained, endure this all the more firmly and zealously, seeking out the Lord in the heart: for to those who force themselves belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, *and the violent take it by force* (Matt. 11:12), and the rest." And again he says, concerning how one should utter the Prayer: "The Fathers spoke thus: one says the whole Prayer, *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me;* another says half, *Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me* — and this is more convenient by reason of the infirmity and childishness of the mind. And no one himself, without the Spirit, can secretly name the Lord Jesus purely and perfectly, *except by the Holy Spirit* (II Cor. 12:3); but, like a dumb child, he cannot utter it with his tongue. And he should not, out of slothfulness, frequently change the invocation of the Name, but only rarely, for the sake of restraint." Again: "Some teach that it should be pronounced with the lips, and others with the mind; but I allow both the one and the other. Sometimes the mind becomes tired, becoming wearied with speaking; and sometimes the lips do. Therefore, one should pray with both — both with the lips and with the mind; however, one should call out silently and without disturbance, lest the voice, disturbing the feeling and attention of the mind, should hinder it, until the mind, having become accustomed to this, should advance and receive power from the Spirit to pray strongly and entirely. Then one will no longer need to speak with the lips, and one will not even be able to, being in a condition to perform the activity with the mind alone" (First and Second of the last Seven Chapters).

And so, behold how the above-mentioned Holy Fathers, as has been indicated, present the very clear teaching and practice of the learning of the mental activity for beginners. And from this teaching one may understand also the teaching of other Saints concerning this activity, which is set forth in a most direct manner.

The end of the Six Chapters. To the Most Merciful God may there be glory, honor, worship and thanksgiving unto the endless ages. Amen.

(*In the original there is not a complete ending to these chapters.*)

The TYPICON of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH SITUATION TODAY

IN ORDER TO PRESERVE (or return to) the true spirit of the Orthodox Divine services, it is not enough to be against the senseless reforms of the church modernists, who wish to substitute a "modern minimum" for the inspiring standard of the Church's Typicon. One must also have a clear idea of what the Holy Fathers had in mind when, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they compiled the Divine services for the benefit of us, the faithful. Mere outward knowledge of the services — their history, differences between the Greek and Russian Typicons, etc. — is of decidedly secondary importance; this knowledge can make one an "expert" in the Typicon, but that is not what is needed today. *The Divine services must be spiritual food from which the faithful can take real nourishment for eternal life.* Everything else is secondary to this aim. The situation of Orthodox Christians in the modern world is too desperate to allow us the luxury of being merely "correct" in the performance of the Divine services. It is far better, while indeed knowing as well as possible the high standard which the Church offers us, to be "incorrect" and deficient and, reproaching ourselves for our deficiency, nevertheless *singing and praying to God with love and fervor according to our strength.*

The "outward knowledge" which is offered in this series of articles is not, therefore, intended to produce "Typicon experts"; and for this reason it is not offered in systematic form. Basic systematic information on the Church services is already available in standard textbooks.† Here we shall offer rather material to inspire the fervor of believers, with emphasis both on the ideal of the Typicon and on what can be done practically under the conditions in which the faithful find themselves today.

There is no need falsely to idealize the contemporary performance of the Divine services in the Russian Church Outside of Russia; our hierarchs themelves have spoken very frankly about some of the deficiencies of our ordinary services and about the need to bring them ever closer to the ideal which the Typicon holds out to us. Thus, Archbishop Averky of Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York, makes some sharp and appropriate remarks in a report concerning the "Internal Mission" of the Church which was approved by the whole Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia in 1962:*

† In English a good primer of the cycles of services, with a description of the church, vestments, accounts of feasts, fasts, sacraments, etc., is: Archpriest D. Sokolof, *A Manual of the Orthodox Church's Divine Services.* This paperback book has been reprinted and is available inexpensively from Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 13361.

* Archbishop Averky, *True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World* (in Russian), Jordanville, New York, 1971, p. 202.

"It is extremely important for the success of the Internal Mission to attract, as far as possible, *all* the faithful into one or another kind of active participation in the Divine services, so that they might not feel themselves merely idle spectators or auditors who come to church as to a theater 'just in order to hear the beautiful singing of the choir which performs, as often happens now, totally unchurchly, bravura, theatrical compositions. It is absolutely necessary to re-establish the ancient custom, which is indeed demanded by the Typicon itself, of the singing of the *whole people* at Divine services... It is a shame to the Orthodox faithful not to know its own wondrous, incomparable Orthodox Divine services, and therefore it is the duty of the pastor to make his flock acquainted with the Divine services, which may be accomplished most easily of all by way of attracting the faithful into practical participation."

Further, in the same article Archbishop Averky dispels the popular misconception that Orthodox Christians are not allowed to perform any church services without a priest, and that therefore the believing people become quite helpless and are virtually "unable to pray" when they find themselves without a priest — as happens more and more often today. He writes, on the same page of this article:

"According to our Typicon, all the Divine services of the daily cycle — apart, needless to say, from the Divine Liturgy and other Church sacraments — may be performed also by persons not ordained to priestly rank. This has been widely done in their practice of prayer by all monasteries, sketes, and desert-dwellers in whose midst there are no monks clothed in the rank of priest. And up until the most recent time this was to be seen also, for example, in Carpatho-Russia, which was outstanding for the high level of the piety of its people, where in case of the illness or absence of the priest, the faithful themselves, without a priest, read and sang the Nocturnes, and Matins, and the Hours, and Vespers, and Compline, and in place of the Divine Liturgy, the Typica.

"In no way can one find anything whatever reprehensible in this, for the texts themselves of our Divine services have foreseen such a possibility, for example, in such a rubric which is often encountered in them: 'If a priest is present, he says: *Blessed is our God...* If not, then say with feeling: *By the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.*' And further there follows the whole order of the Divine services in its entirety, except, of course, for the ectenes and the priestly responses. The longer ectenes are replaced by the reading of 'Lord, have mercy' twelve times, and the Little Ectene by the reading of 'Lord, have mercy' three times.

"Public prayer, as none other, firmly unites the faithful. And so, in all those parishes where there is no permanent priest, it is absolutely necessary not merely to permit, but indeed to recommend to the faithful that they come together on Sundays and feast days in church or even in homes, where there is no church, in order to perform together such public prayer according to the established order of Divine services."

This normal church practice, which like so much else that belongs to the best Orthodox Church tradition, has become so rare today as to seem rather a novelty, is nonetheless being practiced now in several parishes of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, as well as in some private homes. This practice can and should be greatly increased among the faithful, whether it is a question of a parish that has lost its priest or is too small to support one, of a small group of believers far from the nearest church which

has not yet formed a parish, or a single family which is unable to attend church on every Sunday and feast day.

Indeed, this practice in many places has become the only answer to the problem of keeping alive the tradition of the Church's Divine services, whether in the far-scattered flocks of the Russian Diaspora, which are often far from the nearest organized parish with its priest, or in the missionary flocks of true Orthodox Christians, both in America and abroad, which likewise are small and widely scattered and are often far from the nearest true Orthodox Church — it being understood that spiritual communion is impossible with the great apostate bodies which continue to call themselves Orthodox.

The way of conducting such services should preferably be learned from those who already practice it in accordance with both the written and oral tradition of the Church. But even in the absence of such guidance, an Orthodox layman, when he is unable to attend church services, can derive much benefit from simply reading through some of the simpler services, much as he already reads Morning and Evening Prayers. Thus, he can read any of the Hours (First, Third, and Sixth Hours in the morning, Ninth Hour in the afternoon), which have no changeable parts except for the Troparion and Kontakion; he can simply read through the stichera of the great feasts on the appropriate day;* or he can read the Psalms appointed for a given day, as indicated in the next chapter.

In pre-Revolutionary Russia in parish churches Vespers and Matins, as well as Nocturnes, Compline, and the Hours, were served *daily,* and this is surely the *norm* against which the Orthodox practice of today must be measured. The Divine services of Sundays and feast days, and the eves of these days, are the very *minimum* of any normal church life today, without which Orthodox piety simply cannot be inculcated and preserved. And these days must be spent in a holy way. There do remain a few parishes and homes where an akathist is regularly sung on Sunday afternoons, but the former pious Russian custom of gathering in homes on Sundays and feast days to sing religious songs or "psalms" has all but been swallowed up by the tempo of modern life. And how many Orthodox Christians still keep the eves of feasts in a fitting manner, devoting them to the All-night Vigil (or Vespers) and prayer, and not to worldly entertainments? It was a strict rule of Archbishop John Maximovitch of blessed memory not to allow anyone who had attended a ball or other worldly entertainment on Saturday night (even if he had first attended the Divine service, as if to "fulfill his obligation"!) to participate in any way in the Divine services of Sunday; and how sober were those Russians made who were found by Archbishop John when he "went to the Halloween Ball" on the eve of the canonization of St. John of Kronstadt in 1964, when by his stern and wordless gaze he accused their faithlessness!

The realization of how far we fall short of the ideal (that is, *normal*) Orthodox life and practice should be for us the cause, not of discouragement, but rather of a great desire to know and seek this ideal, as far as we are able in the admittedly very distrac-

* The Hours and other services of the daily cycle are contained in the *Hapgood Service Book,* which also contains the sacraments and parts of the great feasts. The complete texts of the great feasts are in *The Festal Menaion* (Faber and Faber). These books may be purchased from Eastern Orthodox Books, P.O.Box 302, Willits, Calif., 95490.

ting conditions of modern life. Above all we should know that this ideal is a very practical one and does not require of us either tremendous efforts which are simply beyond our strength, or the attainment of some exalted "spiritual" state without which one dare not begin to sing praise to God. In fact, one reason which has prevented the wider use of the Orthodox daily services in everyday life is the presence of a certain dualistic error which has crept into the thinking of Orthodox Christians, namely, that being an Orthodox Christian is something abstractly "spiritual," whereas in everyday life an Orthodox Christian is "just like everyone else." On the contrary, the Holy Fathers clearly teach us that a true Christian is different from everyone else *both inwardly and outwardly,* the one being an expression of the other. Thus, St. Macarius the Great teaches, "Christians have their own world, their own way of life, their own understanding and word and activity; for different from theirs are the way of life, and understanding, and word, and activity of the people of this world. Christians are one thing, and lovers of the world quite another; between the one and the other lies a great separation.... Inasmuch as the mind and understanding of Christians is constantly occupied with reflection on the heavenly, they behold eternal good things by communion and participation in the Holy Spirit. In very action and power they have been enabled to become children of God.... [It is chiefly by] the renewal of the mind, the pacification of thoughts, by love and a heavenly devotion to the Lord that the new creature, the Christian, is distinguished from all other people in the world.... [And so also,] Christians have a different world, a different food, a different clothing, different enjoyments, a different communion, a different way of thinking — because they are better than all other men." (Homily V, 1, 4, 20.)

This is the Orthodox Christian standard against which our own lives must be measured. Do we, Orthodox Christians, really differ from everyone else by our food and dress — so important in our own days of brazen indecency and gluttony — by our words and actions, by our life and prayer? If we do not, it is fairly certain that spiritually, also, we are not different from the lovers of this world. Do our Sundays and feast days have a savor different from that of the holidays of the lovers of this world, different because we constantly devote them to remembering God and singing His praises, to reading the Lives of His Saints and the inspired writings of His Holy Fathers? Do we devote at least a portion of every day, according to our strength and time, to the labor of prayer, using the God-given means, the daily cycle of services, as a way of lifting ourselves above the heavy weight of this modern worldly life? Without such labor, how can we be saved? St. Macarius the Great teaches: "Very many people wish to earn the Kingdom without labors, without asceticism, without sweat; but this is impossible." (Homily V, 13.)

For people who live in the world and are engrossed in the cares of life, great ascetic labors are almost out of the question. How important it is, then, for such people to take maximum advantage of that pleasant and inspiring labor which the Holy Church presents to their striving souls — the daily cycle of the Church's prayer. Even a small, if regular, degree of participation in this life is already capable of making an Orthodox Christian *different* from other people, opening up to him the special way of thinking and feeling which is the life of Christ's Church on earth.

Next Issue: *The Psalms of David.*

Hieromartyr John of Latvia

(*Continued from page* 18)

mous dimensions: he opened an Orthodox seminary, property was restored to churches, and finally, he managed to obtain the return from the Soviet Union of Church holy objects and property for great sums of money. Orthodox Latvians, who before Archbishop John's coming had largely concealed themselves "for fear of the Jews," now stepped out boldly behind their fearless leader, and the Latvian Church experienced the best years of its brief existence. In a few years, according to official statistics, the Orthodox population increased by twenty per cent; thirteen new churches were built and consecrated, and four others were under construction, with still others being planned, when Archbishop John was martyred.

The situation of the Latvian Orthodox Church in the first years after the First World War and the Russian Civil War was, of course, difficult; but incomparably more difficult was the situation of Orthodox believers in Russia. Archbishop John successfully fought against his local enemies, the Latvian Communists, but he also did not forget his chief enemies, the enemies of the whole Russian people, the Bolsheviks.

And so it was that a regular campaign of lies and slanders was started against Archbishop John. The campaign was systematic and well-planned; when one lie was exposed, a new slander would immediately be invented. Hysterical women were even found who testified in court of their clandestine "meetings" with the Archbishop; but all their lies were exposed. Alas! We Orthodox Christians in Latvia must take the blame for not sufficiently protecting our Vladika. Few were those who fought against the campaign of lies and slander. And yet, few were those families among the Russians in Latvia whom Vladika was not ready to help in one way or another. He was the benefactor also of many non-Orthodox people. He was truly the father of his flock.

In the last years Archbishop John suffered much from the so-called "Russian Christian" Movement. Archbishop John himself loved children and young people very much and was glad to see representatives of the youth, and it was not rare that groups of the youth, and even whole classes of students, would visit him (for in Riga at that time there were more than a dozen Russian Primary Schools and several Gymnasia). At first Archbishop John was very sympathetic to the newly-formed Movement; but with time, when the nature of this organization became clear, he had nothing more to do with it. His

THE ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL OF RIGA,
DEDICATED TO THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

reputation among "liberal" religious groups was likewise not helped by his friendly relations with the Synod of Russian Bishops Abroad, even though for political reasons he could not be a part of them. In 1931, on the tenth anniversary of Archbishop John's episcopate in Riga, Metropolitan Anthony, Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, was to call him "a courageous defender of Orthodoxy."

Archbishop John's political enemies did not hesitate even to send hooligans to attack him once when he was returning in the evening to his summer residence outside of town. As usual, he was walking home the several miles from the end of the streetcar line. The hirelings were supposed to beat him mercilessly, but instead, miscalculating the physical strength of their victim,

The Funeral of Archbishop John, with the Orthodox clergy of Riga surrounding the coffin.

The Sepulchre of Archbishop John in the Holy Protection Cemetery of Riga, as it looks today.

they were mastered by him. To begin with, the Archbishop knocked their heads together until stars appeared before their eyes. But then he took them home, spoke to them from the heart, and had such an effect on them that they repented of everything before him and became his friends.

In the life of Archbishop John there were some circumstances which for a while were enigmatic. His slanderers for a long time reproached him for the fact that he lived alone, without a cell-attendant. "He is afraid of witnesses," they said, repeating the slanders which were spread about him. But when his well-wishers asked him about this, he replied that it was better for him to live alone. Various people came to him and, besides this, he did not want to subject anyone to danger. The meaning of these words became clear only after his martyr's death.

And indeed, people of the most various sorts would come to see the Archbishop. Famous foreign prelates would come, and also poor people and some kind of suspicious-looking ragged creatures. To the end he had some sort of underground ties with Russia, and he received information from there by ways of his own. No matter how hard the Communist regime strove to seal Russia hermetically, still people would evidently be going there and back, and Archbishop John was some kind of a transfer point. But he knew how to keep quiet, and hardly anyone knew the details of this side of his activity.

Another side of Archbishop John's activity was his inspired, ceaseless and completely open battle against the atheist regime in Russia. No matter where he might speak (as a member of Parliament, before Russian organizations, and most of all from the Church ambo), everywhere his powerful and bold voice sounded forth fearlessly, imploringly and loudly, like an alarm bell. He was an inspired preacher; he spoke simply and briefly and did not spare his language when he talked about the Bolsheviks. Many reproached him for this also, as in general for his political activity. Indeed, it is the standard Soviet accusation against the New Martyrs that their confession of truth is an act of "politics." I think that he would have preferred a solitary life in some quiet monastery cell, giving himself over to spiritual labors; but the times would not allow this. Anyone who ever saw the Archbishop in the garden of his summer residence, near the beehives, or working at his carpenter's bench, knew that such occupations were not foreign to him.

A good example of Archbishop John's fearless expression of the truth is to be seen in his sermon in the Riga Cathedral on Great Friday, April 10, 1931. For him it is not possible to separate the Golgotha of Christ our Saviour

and the Golgotha of the contemporary Orthodox Church. Standing before the Holy Shroud of Christ, the hierarch's flock does not "escape reality," but is told how to understand the terrible reality of these days, and how to be victorious in its midst. (Excerpts; full Russian text in *Orthodox Russia,* 1953, no. 5)

"Of Joseph of Arimathea it is said that he was a disciple of Christ, but secretly, "for fear of the Jews." In this respect he is not an example for us. To hide one's faith out of fear is not a work worthy of respect. If you really fear God, you will no longer fear anyone else at all. Stand for Christ and He will stand for you. Lukewarmness must be cast out of oneself and out of others. The fear of men is the weeds on the spiritual field which are to be uprooted.

"Joseph of Arimathea followed Christ from afar, secretly. Oh, if only this would serve as a warning for all those who in our time also hesitate to confess Christ openly. Renounce the evil counsels of the world and the flesh! Forward for truth, righteousness, and the Lord!

"But perhaps someone will say: the time when Joseph lived and acted was different from our time. O my contemporary friends, either you actually do not see, or else in a cowardly manner you pretend not to see that our present reality, both in word and in deed, has far surpassed all that measure of evil deeds which forced Joseph to cease his concealment and come out into the arena of open confession of Christ.

"Anyone who follows the contemporary press and the contemporary oratorical platform knows that the contemporary mockery of Christ has incomparably surpassed both in its malice and in its crudeness all the mockeries which the contemporaries of Christ cast upon Him up to Golgotha and on Golgotha. The person of Christ, and the teaching of Christ, and all the works of Christ, and His whole work in general have been subjected to the crudest and most shameful mockery. If the present-day enemies of Christ could obtain the Body of Christ which was crucified on Golgotha, it would again be subjected to the most refined torments, the most subtle means of torture to death. But the Body is not available to them, and so the enemies of Christ exhaust themselves in tortures and crucifixion of the Body of Christ which is on the earth, and is called the Church of Christ. Recall what you have seen, heard, and read about the torture of the Body of Christ, the Church, within the boundaries of Bolshevism, and even in the incompleteness of our information you will understand that *the demon of Golgotha is a child by comparison with the Soviet demon.*

"Yes, our time is not like the time of Joseph of Arimathea. It is incomparably more evil and cruder than that time. If Joseph found in the evil deed

of Golgotha sufficient inspiration to be converted from secret confession to open confession, then our time should be considered as one that calls us to a loud confession joined to a clearly expressed protest against the raising upon Golgotha not only of God, but also of man. At the mouth of the river Thames, at one of the points which juts out and marks a dangerous shallow, there has been placed a bell which by its ringing during storms warns sailors against the mortal danger. The fiercer the storm, the sharper and more powerful its ring. At the present time of storm and darkness, when the shallow of Bolshevism has spread across the whole face of the earth as a deliberate trap, *every soul must take upon itself the role of this bell* which warns and saves. They are deeply mistaken who consider this danger to be local. And even a danger of a purely local character cannot be a matter of indifference for a Christian; but the present Bolshevik danger of which we are speaking has the intensified aim of becoming universal. Therefore the bell of alarm at the present time should be sounded across the whole face of the earth, to warn everyone everywhere.

"No concessions to the enemy! Give him an inch and he will take a mile; give him a finger and he will take the whole arm.

"When we entered the Church of Christ by the gates of Holy Baptism, of us was demanded the confession of faith in God in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Church. But also, three times we were asked: 'Do you renounce satan and all his works and all his angels and all his service and all his pride?' And three times we replied: 'I renounce them.' Again three times we were asked: 'Have you renounced satan?' And we replied three times: 'I have renounced him.' When in later life it comes to confessing the faith, usually this part of the confession is forgotten. At all times this is bad, but at a time of intense battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan, such a forgetfulness is intolerable.

"For the infirm human consciousness there is born the temptation that supposedly one may confess God and at the same time keep a neutral position, a kind of loyalty with regard also to the kingdom of satan. There is created thus a kind of double citizenship. But upon all of us there lies a double responsibility: on the one hand, to kindle in oneself and in others an active love for the Kingdom of God, and on the other hand to kindle a no less active hatred for the kingdom of the devil.

"The Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever. When the shame of godlessness and impiety now presses upon the children of the new Israel, Holy Russia, somewhere in the plains of Russia, or in the Siberian for-

ests, or in some one of the countries of exile and diaspora of the great God-bearing people, there is already being prepared a grace-given field which will cause to sprout up a chosen one of God for the deliverance and rebirth of the God-bearing people. There are no more leaders, and pastors are in straitened conditions. The human eye does not see from where deliverance might come; but the All-knowing Lord knows this. The Lord, by ways known to Him alone, will raise up suitable men at a suitable time. Of this we can and must be convinced."

As perhaps few other non-Russians, Archbishop John felt deeply Russia's tragedy and saw the significance of Orthodox Russia for the whole world.

The Bolsheviks do not kill people abroad for nothing; this, after all, is a somewhat risky thing to do. Rather, they destroy only those people who are dangerous to them. The murder of Archbishop John was the best evaluation of his activity "on the other side" of the iron curtain. Historical events that followed his murder: the war, the occupation of Latvia, and its forcible annexation to the Soviet Union after a fraudulent election, showed clearly for whom it was necessary and why it was necessary to remove Vladika.

The generally accepted version of the Archbishop's death, which was confirmed for me personally by the brother of the reposed, Anton Pommer, is as follows: The Archbishop had been called in the evening by Sobinov, the famous singer from Russia, who was passing through Riga; he was an old friend of the Archbishop's, such a one as the Bolsheviks once in a while allowed to go abroad. It was agreed that he would come to the Archbishop in the evening. Vladika opened the door to him and — let in his murderers. Sobinov himself died under mysterious circumstances at this very same time.

The story went that firemen, who had been called by neighbors about two o'clock in the morning, found a frightful disorder in the Archbishop's residence: cupboards and drawers had been thrown out, the desk had been rummaged, furniture had been overturned. The Archbishop had evidently been wounded in the hall, on the lower floor, and on the leaf of the door had been carried to the attic, where in the workshop he had been tied to the carpenter's bench and, having been doused with kerosene, had been set afire. An examination of the lungs revealed that he had still been alive at this time, for there was smoke in the lungs. There was evidence that he had been tortured. Both stoves in the hall were burning, and in them some kind of papers had been burned. It is known that he had papers proving the treasonable activity of the Latvian Communists.

This crime was never explained, at least officially. It was probably the only unsolved crime of this sort for the whole period of the existence of independent Latvia. Every child in Latvia knew who were the true inspirers of this crime, but there were no official accusations: the trail led to the Soviet Embassy. The press did not write about this; the shadow which the mighty and cunning neighbor threw upon the small land of two million people was too ominous. But the whole country knew the truth. The crime occurred in the night between Thursday and Friday, October 12, 1934. The Archbishop was in the full flower of his life and activity and was not yet sixty years old, and he was the most outstanding figure in the Church life of the Baltic countries.

I remember that sorrowful day when the news spread in school that the Archbishop was no more. We walked from the streetcar, going those same few miles which the reposed himself had often walked. We stood for the requiem service in the modest wooden church next to the charred house, and looked at the small linen roll which contained all that remained of the mighty Archbishop.

I remember the funeral and burial with some confusion. The whole city was in mourning; more than 100,000 people were in the streets — about one-fourth of the whole population of the city — accompanying the coffin. In the Cathedral, from the bishop's place to the Altar, there were rows of priests, fifty on each side. Everyone followed the coffin. From the Cathedral to the Holy Protection Cemetery, a distance of several miles, a dense crowd lined the way. In this there was a kind of demonstration, a challenge to the unpunished murderers. Soon a small chapel was raised over the grave, a miniature replica of the bell-tower of the Cathedral. In the former residence of the Archbishop in the basement of the Cathedral, a corner was devoted to his memory, with the bench on which he had been burned. A vessel containing a few drops of his blood was walled up in the wall of the Cathedral and an inscription made on a marble plaque. Here every Thursday (the day of the murder) a requiem service was celebrated.

The Cathedral Church of Riga has now been converted into a "planetarium," but the chapel in the cemetery is intact, and requiem services are still sung there by the faithful on the day of the Archbishop's martyrdom, October 12, and on his namesday, June 24.

As long as these holy places are in captivity to the haters of God, it remains for us only to pray that the time of our trials may be cut short, and that the Church, cleansed by the blood of Her martyrs, may again be renewed and may fittingly glorify them.

The Life and Ascetic Labor of Our Father, Elder Paisius, Archimandrite of the Holy Moldavian Monasteries of Niamets and Sekoul. Part Seven

THE LETTERS OF ELDER PAISIUS FROM DRAGOMIRNA, ON THE MONASTIC LIFE

WHILE ELDER PAISIUS was in the Moldavian monastery of Dragomirna, his fame spread far and wide, and those who thirsted for the true monastic life in accordance with the authentic traditions of the Orthodox Church appealed to him for advice and help. The written replies of Blessed Paisius to these appeals reveal him as a great and humble instructor of the unhypocritical monastic life, and they likewise show clearly the principles he applied himself in his own community.

1. To the Most Honorable Fathers in the Lord, of the Monastery of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos of Merlopolyany*

When the brethren of the Skete of Merlopolyany in Vlachia chose as their Elder Schema-hieromonk Alexis, the very same one who had come to Dragomirna to tonsure Elder Paisius in the Schema, several of the brethren, knowing the meek and humble manner of Father Alexis, had doubts that he could be a good superior, and they wrote to Elder Paisius about this. Blessed Paisius replied as follows:

Rejoice in the Lord!

Our holy and God-bearing Fathers have given as a testament in their holy writings that it is not fitting for brethren who have come together in some numbers in the name of Christ, to live without a superior, but by all means they should have one who is skilled in spiritual understanding, to whom they might give over all their will and submit in everything as to the Lord Himself.

* Slavonic text in the Optina edition of the Life of Elder Paisius, pp. 217-220; partial Russian translation, with the introduction used here in italics, in Chetverikov, vol. II, pp. 52-53,

Fulfilling this testament, our reposed common Father† of blessed memory did not leave the flock entrusted to him by God to remain without a shepherd after his death, but in departing to the Lord he put in his own place the all-honorable Father Theodosius, who was capable of governing and instructing the souls of the brethren on the path of salvation. But the All-merciful God, Whose decrees are unfathomable, out of love for His slave, visited him as His own beloved child, for the sake of a greater reward, with a bodily affliction of such a kind that it is difficult for him to leave his cell, as he has declared in a letter.

Seeing that because of such a severe affliction he can in no way bear any longer the governance of the monastery and all the brethren, and likewise following the example of our reposed Father of blessed memory, he put in his own place the all-honorable Father Alexis. Being informed of this, I greatly rejoiced in soul and gave thanks to the Almighty Lord that He has revealed such a man to be His slave; and I think that this was not done otherwise than precisely because the very Grace of the All-holy Spirit touched the heart of the all-honorable Elder, Father Theodosius, and brought all the brethren in common to such unanimity that by the common good will of all they chose as their superior this worthy man, Father Alexis. In my soul I am convinced that he will be capable, by the God-given spiritual understanding which he possesses, to instruct and shepherd the souls of the brethren in the pasture of salvation.

But why, O my holy Fathers and beloved brethren, knowing Father Alexis' humble manner and extreme meekness which were given him by God from his childhood and were likewise acquired by labor, and knowing his inexperience in governing, do you doubt that because of this he will be able to govern the monastery and the brethren, and so you ask advice and help from me about this? May the Lord assure you that, if you wish to obey me and submit to my advice in everything as you promise, then I offer this advice to you in God: May you wish to choose none other as superior than Father Alexis alone; may he be to you as Instructor and Father in God. Submit to him as to the Lord Himself, and receive from his lips as from the lips of God the word which is for the profit of your souls. Judge for yourselves: who is more fit to govern the souls of the brethren than such a spiritual man? In the first place, he is one of the eldest disciples of our reposed Father [Basil] of blessed memory, tonsured by him and made by him a son of your monastery, one made

† The Elder Basil of Merlopolyany, reposed in April, 1767. See Section 17 of this Life (*The Orthodox Word,* November-December, 1972).

worthy of priesthood and a skilled spiritual father. In the second place, what is more important, he has acquired love for God and neighbor, has an upright mind and sound understanding, and he benefits all by his virtuous life.

Have no doubts about his humility and meekness; for these are the root and foundation for every superior. As the Holy Fathers write, let the superior for the brethren be humble, meek, without malice, quiet, well able to bear any reproach first of all himself, if such there should be from anyone owing to the snares of the adversary; let him be able to give an example of patience and chaste life for the brethren. Have no doubts if he seems not to know good administration; God is able to provide this by means of other of the brethren. But the thing most needful for the salvation of all is to know how to order well the souls of the brethren according to the Lord's commandments and the teaching of the Holy Fathers. There is nothing about which to have doubts if he is infirm of body, when he is sound of spirit and sound in spiritual discernment.

Therefore, most honorable Fathers and beloved brethren in the Lord, falling down mentally before the feet of all of you, I entreat you with tears not to disdain my advice, even if I am unworthy, but to accept the Shepherd and Instructor given to you by God, the all-honorable Father Alexis, and not to prefer anyone else while he is alive; and even if he himself might not wish and might reject the office of superior, then with all humility entreat him even against his will. And knowing the weakness of his health, do not ask of him bodily labors beyond his strength, but in every way give him repose, lest he prematurely exhaust his bodily health and there be no benefit for the brethren. For it is sufficient if he sit more in his cell, guarding his health, and read soul-profiting books, so that at the right time he might be able to give sound and soul-profiting counsel suitable for the brethren.

Likewise, in outward administrative matters also do not disdain him as one ignorant, but in every undertaking, for every work, always receive from him blessing and counsel, with all humility and assurance. And if in any matter some brother might think that there is no need to ask the Father, since "I know and am able to do it myself": this is from the enemy. But from God and the Holy Fathers this is what we have received: that in every matter, even if a brother might be very skilled in it, first he must ask the superior, and not compel him to do as he himself wishes, but leave it to the superior's judgment and will; for it befits a brother to humble his own thoughts entirely and, like the last ignoramus, come to the Father and ask whether his will and blessing

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This important work has been reprinted after many years by a young Jordanville Holy Trinity Seminary graduate, Father Vladimir Malchenko, as the first in a series of reprints of basic texts on Russian asceticism and sanctity.

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is on this work, and thus to begin according to his will. And then God, seeing the brother's humility and true obedience (for without humility there is no obedience), will instruct the heart of the superior, by His Holy Spirit, to give a profitable reply and counsel, and He will aid the novice by His unseen grace in the work that has been undertaken. And if the superior should reply of his own will: Do as you know best — then, with the fear of God and trusting in the prayers of the superior, begin as God will instruct you. Having completed the obedience, whether inside or outside the monastery, or just having returned from the road, again go to the Father, and having confessed in detail what you have done, fall down at his feet begging forgiveness for whatever sins you have committed in holy obedience; for it is characteristic of Angels not to sin at all in anything. Likewise, humble yourselves before each other, and prefer the other to yourself, and have love according to God among yourselves; and may there be in you a single soul and a single heart by the Grace of Christ.

If I hear and understand that such an order prevails among you, I will rejoice and glorify the All-good God and will entreat the Lord that He may grant you, in His incalculable mercy, strength and power for the perfect keeping of His Divine commandments; and in every way, as much as I have strength, I will help you in needs of soul and body and consider your monastery as my own, according to your common desire.

To help Father Alexis in administrative governance, I am now sending two brothers, Father Matthew and Father Dionysius, who, I hope, will be of great help to the entire holy Monastery.

Having offered this to your love, with hope in your God-pleasing correction in the doing of the Lord's commandments, I remain,

Wishing your health and salvation,

Hieromonk Paisius, Elder of Dragomirna

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